

## **Rep. Cuellar's Language in the FY21 Defense Appropriations Bill**

*“Sexual Assault Prevention and Response - The Department of Defense has failed to address the sexual assault crisis and failed to protect the men and women who serve every day in the United States military. Sexual assault remains the most underreported crime in the military. The Department's 2019 report on sexual assault in the military found only one third of sexual assaults were reported and of the women who did report 43 percent said they had a negative experience doing so. Still, the Department remains resistant to reforming how sexual assault is reported, requiring sexual assault victims to report to an internal entity to receive health care access or to the command to be referred to military law enforcement. Neither option relieves the victim of fear of reprisal or stigma, nor does it offer the victim much hope for justice or recourse. Of the roughly 6,000 unrestricted reports referred to command only 300 were prosecuted, according to the report.*

*The Committee believes the current SAPRO reporting policy fails servicemembers, diminishes military readiness, and harms recruitment and retention efforts. The Committee directs the Comptroller General to conduct a review of the Department's policy for reporting sexual assault and its effectiveness in protecting victims' privacy, ensuring their safety, and holding offenders accountable. The Comptroller General shall brief the House and Senate Appropriations Committees on its preliminary findings not later than 90 days after the enactment of this Act and shall provide a full report to the same Committees at a date agreed upon at the time of the preliminary briefing.*